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Aboriginal People and the Labour Market: Estimates from the Labour Force Survey, 2008-2010



by Jeannine Usalcas

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.	not available for any reference period
..	not available for a specific reference period
...	not applicable
0	true zero or a value rounded to zero
0s	value rounded to 0 (zero) where there is a meaningful distinction between true zero and the value that was rounded
p	preliminary
r	revised
x	suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*
E	use with caution
F	too unreliable to be published
*	significantly different from reference category ($p < 0.05$)

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Abstract

This report provides an overview of the labour market outcomes of Aboriginal people during and after the labour market downturn. It covers the period of 2008 to 2010, using annual averages by several demographic and labour market activity indicators available from the Labour Force Survey (LFS). It is divided by age group, as well as, when possible, by the Aboriginal identity groups: First Nations people living off-reserve and Métis. The Inuit population is included in the Aboriginal total but not separately as most estimates for this group were not statistically reliable. The report also distinguishes Aboriginal labour market outcomes by gender, province or region and job characteristics such as industry, occupation, hours worked and highest level of education attained.

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Highlights

- The labour market downturn that began in the fall of 2008 lasted longer for Aboriginal people than for non-Aboriginal people. Employment declined by a similar magnitude in both 2009 and 2010 for Aboriginal people, resulting in a decline of 7.1% over the two years.
- While employment also declined among non-Aboriginal people from 2008 to 2009, most of the losses were recouped in 2010, leaving overall employment 0.1 percentage points lower in 2010 than in 2008.
- Employment declines among Aboriginal people were experienced by both First Nations people living off-reserve and Métis populations during the 2008 to 2010 period. There were losses in most provinces or regions, among young people, core-aged and older workers, for both men and women, and within the major education levels.
- Employment losses among core-aged Aboriginal workers over this two-year period were in full-time work and primarily in the private sector. Occupations that saw the largest declines were trades, transport and equipment operators; sales and service workers; occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities; as well as management occupations.
- With continued declines in employment among the Aboriginal population during this two-year period, the gaps in employment, unemployment and participation rates widened between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

Source, data history and definitions

This report draws on data from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) to examine the labour market outcomes of Aboriginal populations for all ten provinces. 2010 marks the fourth year for which the Aboriginal identity questions were extended to all provinces in the LFS.[1] Although the LFS is a monthly survey, this analysis is based on annual data, which is more reliable for small populations such as the Aboriginal population. The Atlantic Provinces were grouped together for more reliable estimates. Also note that Aboriginal estimates for Quebec are based on a small sample size, and are therefore less reliable at the more detailed levels.

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) is a monthly household survey that collects information on labour market activity from the civilian, non-institutionalized population 15 years of age and over. The survey uses a rotating sample of approximately 54,000 households, with each household remaining in the sample for six consecutive months.

The LFS divides the working-age population into three mutually exclusive classifications: employed, unemployed, and not in the labour force. For a full listing and description of LFS variables, see Guide to the Labour Force Survey (Statistics Canada 2011).

The employment rate is the number of employed persons as a percentage of the population 15 years of age and over. The rate for a particular group (for example, youths aged 15 to 24) is the employed in that group as a percentage of the population for that group.

The unemployment rate is the unemployed as a percentage of the labour force (employed plus unemployed).

The participation rate is the number in the labour force as a percentage of the population.

Exclusion of populations living in the territories and on reserves

LFS estimates for the territories are not included in the national totals. Although the LFS produces data on the territories and includes Aboriginal identity questions, a different methodology is used than for the provinces. All data concerning the Aboriginal population in this report therefore reflect the situation of people living in the ten provinces.

The LFS does not include the population living on Indian reserves and settlements. This report includes data for First Nations people (North American Indian) living off-reserve. According to the 2006 Census, approximately 58% of the First Nations working-age population lived off-reserve.

Aboriginal identities

The Aboriginal population can be defined in various ways depending on the perspective and needs of the data user.

The Labour Force Survey measures the Aboriginal population by using the concept of Aboriginal identity. A person has an Aboriginal identity if he or she reports identifying with at least one Aboriginal group, for example, North American Indian (First Nations person), Métis or Inuit. This is based on the individual's own perception of his/her Aboriginal identity. The concept "Aboriginal identity" is not to be confused with "Aboriginal ancestry". Although the latter is measured by the Census, it is not used by the LFS. Moreover, the LFS Aboriginal identity concept differs from the Aboriginal identity concept used in the Census, as Census uses more questions to

1 These identity questions were incorporated at an earlier date in Alberta (2003) and in British Columbia, Saskatchewan and Manitoba (April 2004).

define the identity. For more information, please refer to How Statistics Canada Identifies Aboriginal Peoples *http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/12-592-x/12-592-x2007001-eng.htm*.

In this report, data for First Nations people, Métis and Inuit include only those who reported a single Aboriginal identity. The term 'First Nations' is used throughout the article to refer to people who identified as North American Indian.

Although Inuit are included in the total for Aboriginal people, estimates for Inuit were not reported separately in this report since data were generally not statistically reliable at this level. The data in this report exclude the territories, where a large number of Inuit live, especially in Nunavut (15,300) and the Northwest Territories (2,900) according to the 2006 Census.

Comparison between LFS and Census:

Period covered and timeliness of release

The annual LFS estimates on Aboriginal people are available every year, whereas the Census is conducted every five years. Another difference is that LFS estimates are representative of the entire year (12 reference weeks), whereas census estimates relate to only a single week in May. The time that elapses between the collection and the release of the data is also shorter for the LFS, making it possible to draw a very current picture of the labour market for Aboriginal populations.

Population covered

The population studied is more limited in the LFS, since reserves are excluded, which constitutes an especially important difference in the case of data on Aboriginal people. Also, the estimates for the territories are not included in the national estimates.

Range of statistics

The census data undeniably provide a wider range of data than the LFS. Also, the Census defines the Aboriginal population in various ways, whereas the LFS includes only one question measuring Aboriginal identity.

Comparability of estimates

Data from the LFS and the Census are not directly comparable, since the survey concepts and methods are different. For a more complete description of the differences, see the document "Differences between the LFS and Census estimates on the labour component, July 2008", available on request at Labour Statistics Division.

Aboriginal People and the Labour Market: Estimates from the Labour Force Survey, 2008-2010

by Jeannine Usalcas

1 Analysis

1.1 Employment continued to decline in 2010 among Aboriginal people aged 15 and over

The labour market downturn that began in the fall of 2008 lasted longer for Aboriginal people than for non-Aboriginal people. Employment declined by similar levels in both 2009 and 2010 among Aboriginal people aged 15 and over, with losses of 3.5% or 13,000 in 2009 and 3.7% or 14,000 in 2010 (Chart 1).

Among the non-Aboriginal population, employment declined by 1.6% in 2009 and rose by 1.5% in 2010, bringing employment back to levels just slightly below those observed in 2008.

The labour market slowdown for the Aboriginal population was reflected in both the employment rate and the unemployment rate.

At 53.7% in 2010, the proportion of the working-age Aboriginal population who were employed was 5.9 percentage points below the peak reached in 2008, declining around 3 percentage points in each of 2009 and in 2010 (Chart 2). Among non-Aboriginal people, the employment rate declined by 1.8 percentage points over the same period, to 61.8%.

After an increase of 3.5 percentage points from 2008 to 2009, the unemployment rate continued to rise in 2010 among Aboriginal people, up 0.5 percentage points to 14.3%. In contrast, among non-Aboriginal people, the unemployment rate increased by 2.1 percentage points in 2009, and then declined by 0.2 percentage points to 7.9% in 2010 (Chart 3).

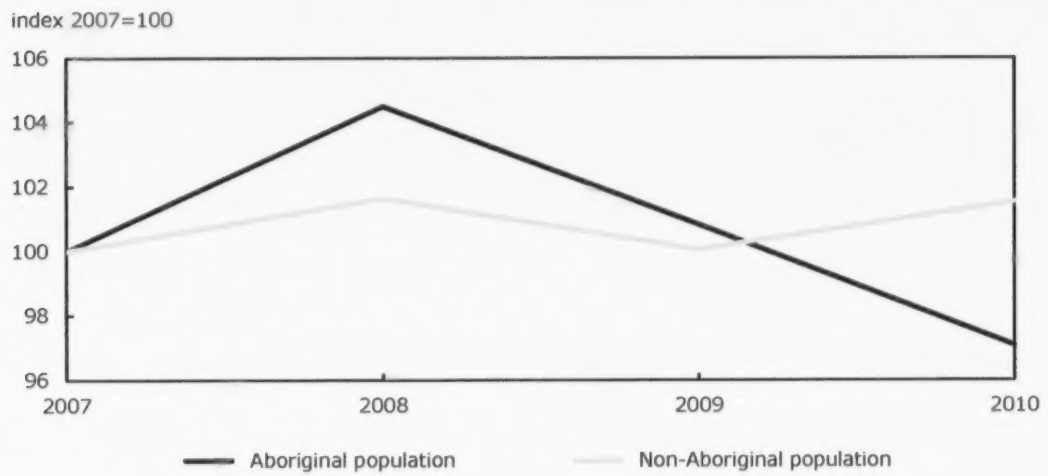
Another indicator that measures labour market difficulty is the supplementary unemployment rate R8 – which adds to the official unemployment rate those who are no longer searching for work as they think no work is available (discouraged), those waiting for recall or replies and long-term future starts (marginally attached), and a portion of involuntary part-time workers (underutilized labour). This rate also shows that the Aboriginal population had more difficulty finding work than the non-Aboriginal population. Among Aboriginal people, R8 was 18.5% in 2010, a 4.5 percentage point increase from 2008. R8 among the non-Aboriginal population was 11.1%, up 2.5 percentage points from 2008 (Chart 4).

With continued employment declines in 2009 and 2010, fewer Aboriginal people participated in the labour market (Chart 5). Over the two-year period, while there was a drop in participation rates in 2009, the largest decline occurred in 2010. Their participation rate retreated to 62.6% in 2010, the lowest participation rate among Aboriginal people since comparable data became available in 2007. In contrast, the largest drop in the participation rate among non-Aboriginal people occurred from 2008 to 2009, and was 67.1% in 2010.

With fewer Aboriginal people participating in the labour market in 2010, the divergence in participation rates widened between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations. In 2010, 62.6% of the Aboriginal population participated in the labour market compared with 67.1% of the non-Aboriginal population – a gap of 4.5 percentage points. In 2008, when the labour market was at its most recent peak, the gap was only 1.2 percentage points.

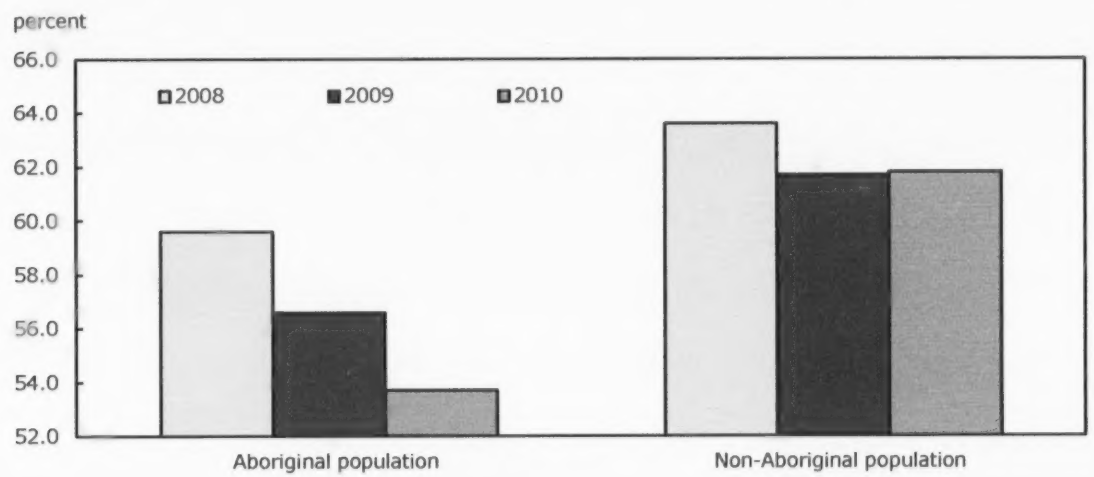
Between 2008 and 2010, First Nations people living off-reserve had a larger drop in participation than did the Métis. The participation rate among the First Nations people living off-reserve declined by 4.8 percentage points over this two-year period compared to a drop of 2.7 points among Métis people.

Chart 1
Employment of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations aged 15 and over, 2007 to 2010



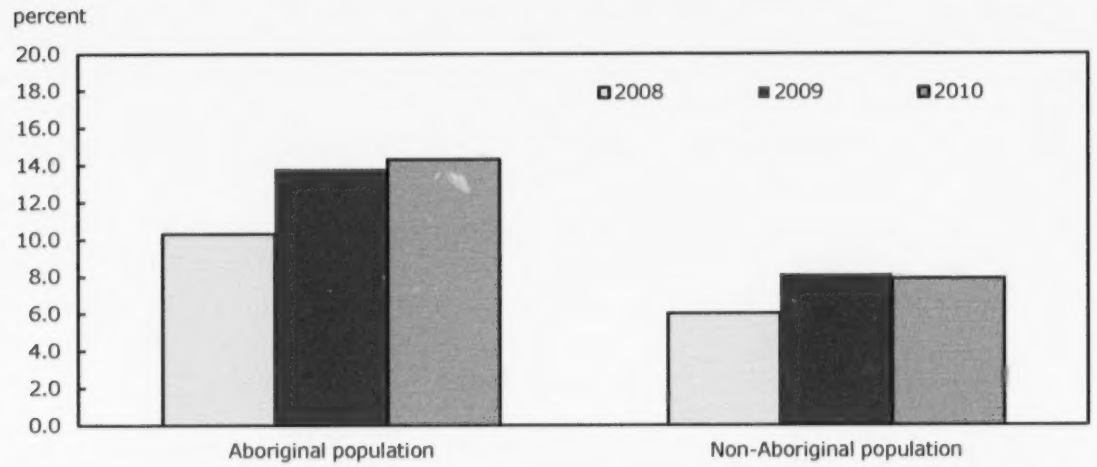
Note(s): Data exclude people living on reserves and in the territories.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

Chart 2
Employment rate of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations aged 15 and over, 2008 to 2010



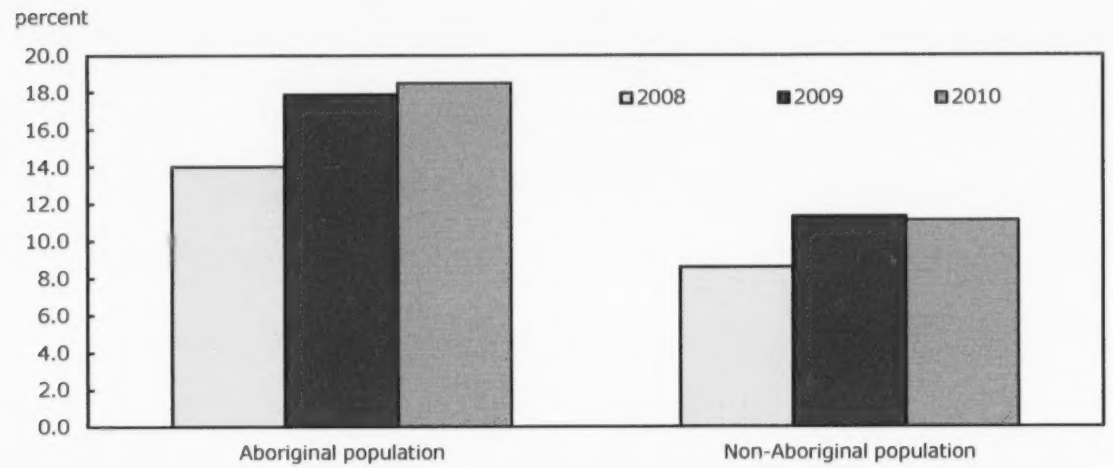
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Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

Chart 3
Unemployment rate of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations aged 15 and over, 2008 to 2010



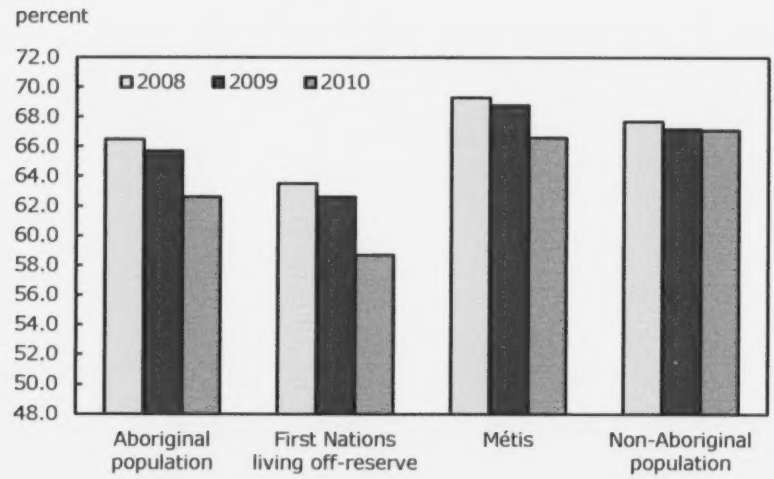
Note(s): Data excludes people living on reserves or in the territories.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

Chart 4
The unemployment rate that includes involuntary part-timers (expressed as full-time equivalents), discouraged searchers and the marginally attached (R8) among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations aged 15 and over, 2008 to 2010



Note(s): Data exclude people living on reserves and in the territories.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

Chart 5
Participation rate of populations aged 15 and over by Aboriginal identity, 2008 to 2010



Note(s): Data exclude people living on reserves and in the territories.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

1.2 Demographics of the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations

The working-age Aboriginal population is younger than the non-Aboriginal population (Table 1). In 2006, 25% of the working-age Aboriginal population was aged 15 to 24 years compared to 16% of non-Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people also had a higher share of their population in the 25 to 54 age group. Consequently, the share of Aboriginal people aged 55 and over was lower at 17% versus 31% for the non-Aboriginal population.

In order to ensure that age differences have limited impact on the comparison of labour market outcomes, this report focuses its analysis on core-aged Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people 25 to 54 years of age. An analysis on the youth labour market (ages 15 to 24), as well as that of older workers (aged 55 and over) is also provided.

Table 1
Distribution of populations aged 15 and over in the 10 provinces by Aboriginal identity and age groups, 2006

	Aboriginal				Non-Aboriginal
	Total	First Nations living off-reserve	Métis	Inuit	Total
	number				
15 years and over	**593,000**	**269,000**	**286,000**	**14,000**	**24,772,000**
	percent				
15 to 24 years	25	25	24	31	16
25 to 54 years	58	59	58	55	53
55 years and over	17	16	18	14	31

Source(s): Statistics Canada, Census 2006.

1.3 Labour market participation and outcomes of core-aged workers

The 25 to 54 age group is referred to as 'core working-age' since people in this age group are the most likely to be participating in the labour market. There are numerous factors that can affect participation in the labour market, such as age, children in the home, school attendance, cultural factors, and labour market conditions.

In 2010, employment levels fell by 4.9% (-12,400) among Aboriginal core-aged workers, a larger decline than in 2009, when employment fell by 2.8% (-7,300). These declines were all in full-time work in both years. Over the two-year period, the employment rate fell 5 percentage points, to 65.8% in 2010 (Table 2).

In contrast, for non-Aboriginal core-aged workers, employment fell by 1.7% (-198,000) in 2009 and increased by 0.8% (+93,000) in 2010. Losses in 2009 were all in full-time work while gains in 2010 were a combination of full and part-time work. The employment rate also declined for this group from 2008 to 2010, down 1.7 percentage points to 80.9%.

The gap in the employment rates between the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal core-aged workers increased in 2010. Compared to an average 12 percentage point difference between 2007 and 2009, the gap increased to 15 points in 2010.

While the decline in the Aboriginal employment rate in 2009 and 2010 was similar for both First Nations people living off-reserve and the Métis, the employment rate remained higher for the Métis (71.1%) than for First Nations people living off-reserve (60.8%) in 2010.

The unemployment rate for First Nations people living off-reserve also reflects their difficulties in finding work in 2010. At 14.9%, the unemployment rate for core-aged First Nations people living off-reserve was higher than that of Métis (9.8%) and the non-Aboriginal population (6.8%).

From 2007 to 2008, rates of participation in the labour market climbed at a faster pace among core-aged Aboriginal people than for the non-Aboriginal population. As well, during the 2008 to 2009 downturn, participation rate declines were of similar magnitude for both groups. However, from 2009 to 2010, participation rates declined rapidly among the Aboriginal core-aged workers, erasing all the gains made in 2008. At the same time, rates of participation among non-Aboriginal workers were similar to the previous year.

Table 2
Labour force characteristics of population aged 25 to 54 by Aboriginal identity, 2008 to 2010

	2008	2009	2010	2008 to 2010
	percent			percentage point change
Participation rate				
Aboriginal population	78.0	77.5	75.0	-3.0
First Nations living off-reserve	74.1	73.5	71.5	-2.6
Métis	82.0	81.4	78.9	-3.1
Non-Aboriginal population	86.9	86.6	86.7	-0.2
Employment rate				
Aboriginal population	70.8	68.5	65.8	-5.0
First Nations living off-reserve	65.5	63.3	60.8	-4.7
Métis	76.2	73.6	71.1	-5.1
Non-Aboriginal population	82.6	80.6	80.9	-1.7
Unemployment rate				
Aboriginal population	9.3	11.6	12.3	3.0
First Nations living off-reserve	11.7	13.8	14.9	3.2
Métis	7.0	9.6	9.8	2.8
Non-Aboriginal population	5.0	7.0	6.8	1.8
Supplementary unemployment rate - R8 [1]				
Aboriginal population	12.5	14.9	16.0	3.5
First Nations living off-reserve	15.0	17.4	19.0	4.0
Métis	10.1	12.6	13.2	3.1
Non-Aboriginal population	7.2	9.6	9.5	2.3

1. R8 combines to the official unemployment rate those who are no longer searching for work because they think no work is available (discouraged), those waiting for recall or replies, long-term future starts (marginally attached), and a portion of involuntary part-timers (underutilized labour).
Note(s): Data exclude people living on reserves and in the territories.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

1.3.1 Unemployment rate rose more among Aboriginal men than women in the downturn

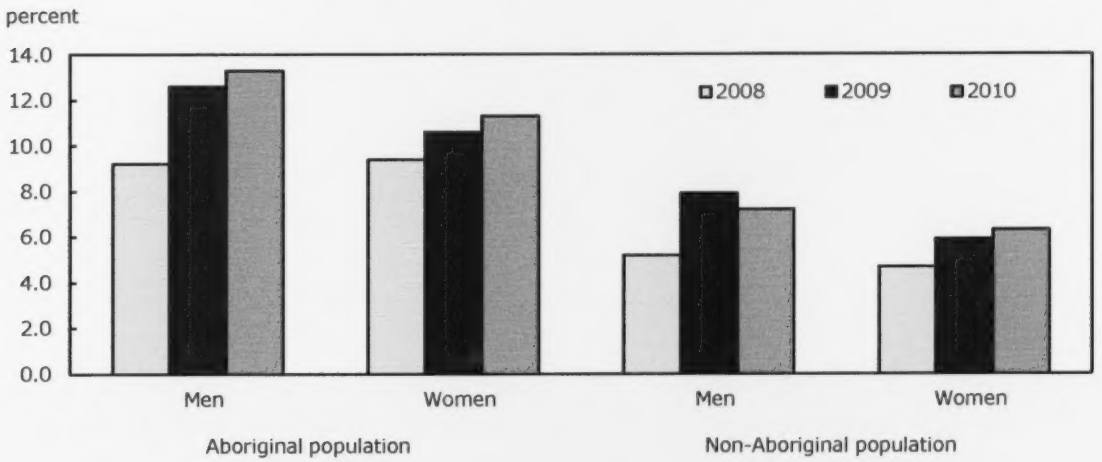
Core-aged Aboriginal men fared worse than Aboriginal women during the 2008 to 2010 period. The unemployment rate among Aboriginal core-aged men increased to 13.3% in 2010, up 4.1 percentage points over the two-year period. Over the same time, the unemployment rate of core-aged Aboriginal women increased by 1.9 percentage points to 11.3%.

The unemployment rate of non-Aboriginal core-aged men also jumped in 2009, up 2.7 percentage points to 7.9%, but then declined to 7.2% in 2010 (Chart 6). For non-Aboriginal core-aged women, it rose 1.6 points to 6.3% over the two-year period.

The decline in the participation rate also reflects the stronger impact of the downturn on Aboriginal core-aged men than women. The rate for Aboriginal men fell to 80.4% in 2010, a decline of 4.5 percentage points from 2008 (Chart 8). Over the same period, the participation rate of Aboriginal women declined by 1.2 percentage points to 70.0%.

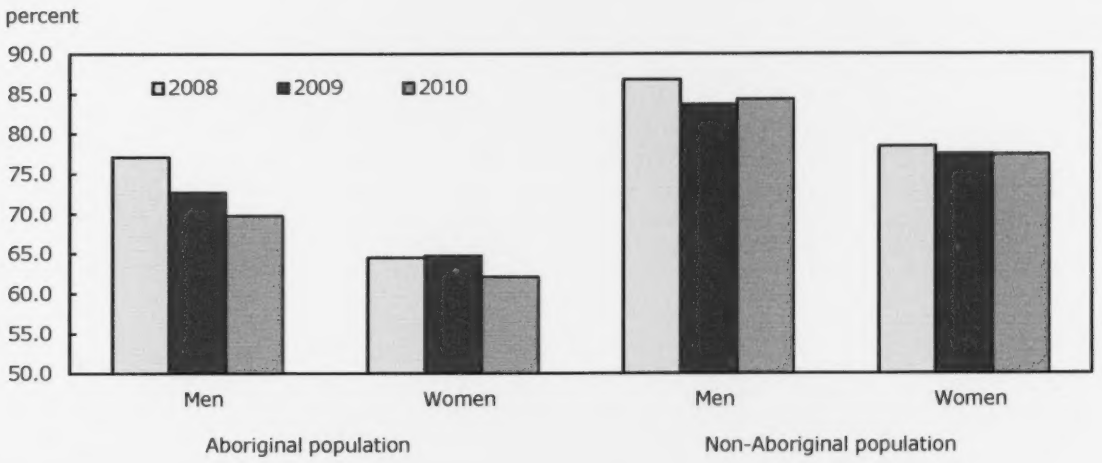
Participation rates fell among First Nations people living off-reserve and Métis people from 2008 to 2010, but the decline was steeper among First Nations men living off-reserve. Among core-aged Aboriginal women, the participation rate decline in 2010 was steeper among Métis women than among their First Nations counterparts (Chart 9). Despite this decline, a higher percentage of Métis women were participating in the labour market in 2010 compared with First Nations women living off-reserve.

Chart 6
Unemployment rate of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men and women aged 25 to 54, 2008 to 2010



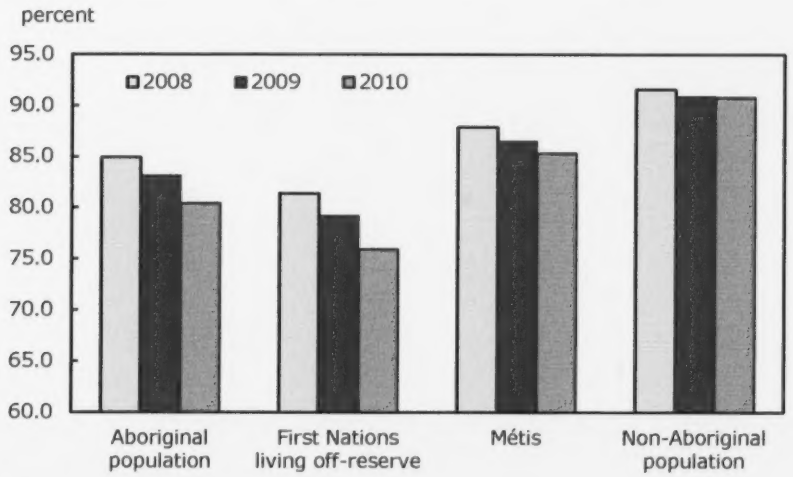
Note(s): Data exclude people living on reserves and in the territories.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

Chart 7
Employment rate of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal men and women aged 25 to 54, 2008 to 2010



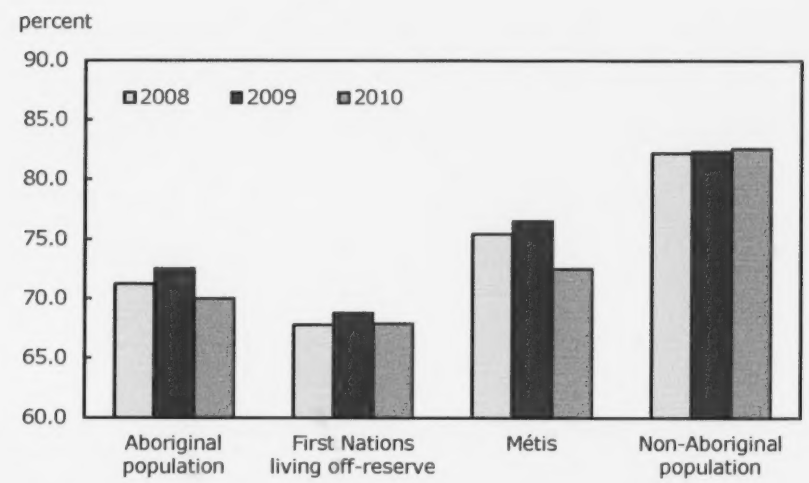
Note(s): Data exclude people living on reserves and in the territories.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

Chart 8
Participation rate for men aged 25 to 54 by Aboriginal identity, 2008 to 2010



Note(s): Data exclude people living on reserves and in the territories.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

Chart 9
Participation rate for women aged 25 to 54 by Aboriginal identity, 2008 to 2010



Note(s): Data exclude people living on reserves and in the territories.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

1.3.2 Largest declines in Quebec, British Columbia, Ontario and Alberta

There were above average employment rate declines in Quebec, British Columbia, Ontario and Alberta among core-aged Aboriginal people between 2008 and 2010. In Saskatchewan and Manitoba, there was little to no change in employment rates over this two-year period (Table 3).

In Quebec, the Aboriginal employment rate was 61.1% in 2010, a decline of 9.7 percentage points from 2008. In 2010, this province posted the lowest employment rate for core-aged Aboriginal people.

In British Columbia, the bulk of the decline in the employment rate occurred from 2008 to 2009. However, with continued declines in 2010, the employment rate fell 8.2 percentage points over the two-year period, reaching 62.7% in 2010. Métis core-aged workers had larger declines than First Nations workers living off-reserve.

At 63.2% in 2010, the employment rate among Aboriginal people in Ontario fell by 6.5 percentage points from 2008. The decline was primarily in 2010 and among First Nations people living off-reserve. In Alberta, the employment rate fell to 69.7% (-5.5 points) over the same period, with most of the decline occurring in 2009.

The employment rate of non-Aboriginal people fell in all provinces and regions over this two-year period, with the strongest declines in Alberta, British-Columbia and Ontario.

The highest employment rates in 2010 among Aboriginal core-aged workers were observed in Manitoba (71.0%), followed by Alberta (69.7%). Among non-Aboriginal workers, the highest rates were in Saskatchewan (86.8%) and Manitoba (86.5%).

Table 3
Labour force characteristics of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations aged 25 to 54 by province or region, 2008 to 2010

	Aboriginal population				Non-Aboriginal population			
	2008	2009	2010	2008 to 2010	2008	2009	2010	2008 to 2010
	percent			percentage point change	percent			percentage point change
Employment rate								
Canada	**70.8**	**68.5**	**65.8**	**-5.0**	**82.6**	**80.6**	**80.9**	**-1.7**
Atlantic Region	68.1	66.6	64.4	-3.7	78.0	77.6	77.9	-0.1
Quebec	70.8	70.7	61.1	-9.7	81.5	80.5	80.9	-0.6
Ontario	69.7	68.8	63.2	-6.5	82.4	79.9	80.3	-2.1
Manitoba	71.0	72.5	71.0	0.0	87.4	85.7	86.5	-0.9
Saskatchewan	66.0	65.8	66.5	0.5	87.8	87.3	86.8	-1.0
Alberta	75.2	70.0	69.7	-5.5	86.2	83.7	82.9	-3.3
British Columbia	70.9	64.6	62.7	-8.2	82.4	79.5	79.9	-2.5
Unemployment rate								
Canada	**9.3**	**11.6**	**12.3**	**3.0**	**5.0**	**7.0**	**6.8**	**1.8**
Atlantic Region	10.4	15.4	16.4	6.0	7.9	8.8	8.9	1.0
Quebec	12.2 E	7.8 E	12.5 E	0.3 E	6.2	7.1	6.8	0.6
Ontario	9.2	11.1	12.6	3.4	5.2	7.7	7.2	2.0
Manitoba	7.3	8.4	9.3	2.0	2.8	3.8	3.8	1.0
Saskatchewan	11.3	10.9	12.8	1.5	2.8	3.5	3.9	1.1
Alberta	7.2	12.6	12.1	4.9	2.6	5.3	5.4	2.8
British Columbia	10.1	14.6	12.8	2.7	3.7	6.5	6.6	2.9
Participation rate								
Canada	**78.0**	**77.5**	**75.0**	**-3.0**	**86.9**	**86.6**	**86.7**	**-0.2**
Atlantic Region	76.1	78.7	77.0	0.9	84.7	85.1	85.5	0.8
Quebec	80.7	76.6	69.8	-10.9	86.9	86.7	86.8	-0.1
Ontario	76.8	77.4	72.3	-4.5	86.9	86.5	86.5	-0.4
Manitoba	76.6	79.2	78.3	1.7	89.9	89.1	89.9	0.0
Saskatchewan	74.4	73.9	76.3	1.9	90.3	90.5	90.3	0.0
Alberta	81.0	80.1	79.3	-1.7	88.6	88.4	87.7	-0.9
British Columbia	78.9	75.6	71.9	-7.0	85.5	85.1	85.5	0.0

E use with caution (coefficient of variation between 16.5% and 33.3%)
Note(s): Data exclude people living on reserves and in the territories.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

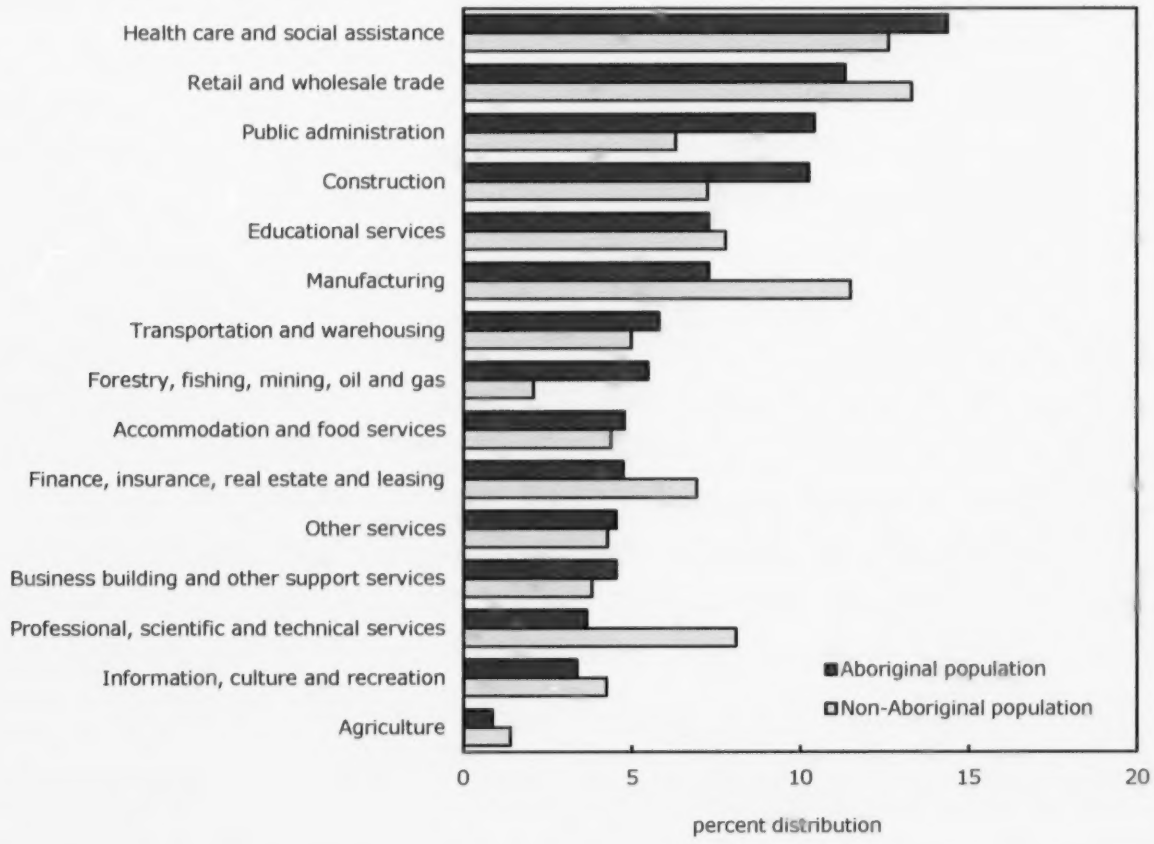
1.3.3 Employment declines driven by manufacturing

The industries in which core-aged Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people work differ slightly. In 2010, Aboriginal people were more likely to be employed in public administration; construction; forestry, fishing, mining, oil and gas; and health care and social assistance than their non-Aboriginal counterparts. On the other hand, non-Aboriginal people were more represented in professional, scientific and technical services; finance, insurance, real estate and leasing; manufacturing; and retail and wholesale trade than Aboriginal core-aged workers (Chart 10).

The manufacturing industry experienced severe employment losses during the 2008 and 2010 period among both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people. For both groups, this industry posted the largest employment declines of the 16 major industry groups during this two-year period. There were also smaller declines among Aboriginal workers in construction; business, building and other support services; retail trade; information, culture and recreation; and transportation and warehousing. Over the same period, employment rose in finance, insurance, real estate and leasing; health care and social assistance; and public administration, industries that were less affected by the employment downturn.

Among non-Aboriginal core-aged workers, employment declines over this two-year period were primarily in manufacturing; transportation and warehousing; and retail and wholesale trade. At the same time, there were gains in health care and social assistance; professional, scientific and technical services; public administration and education.

Chart 10
Employment distribution of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations aged 25 to 54 by industry, 2010



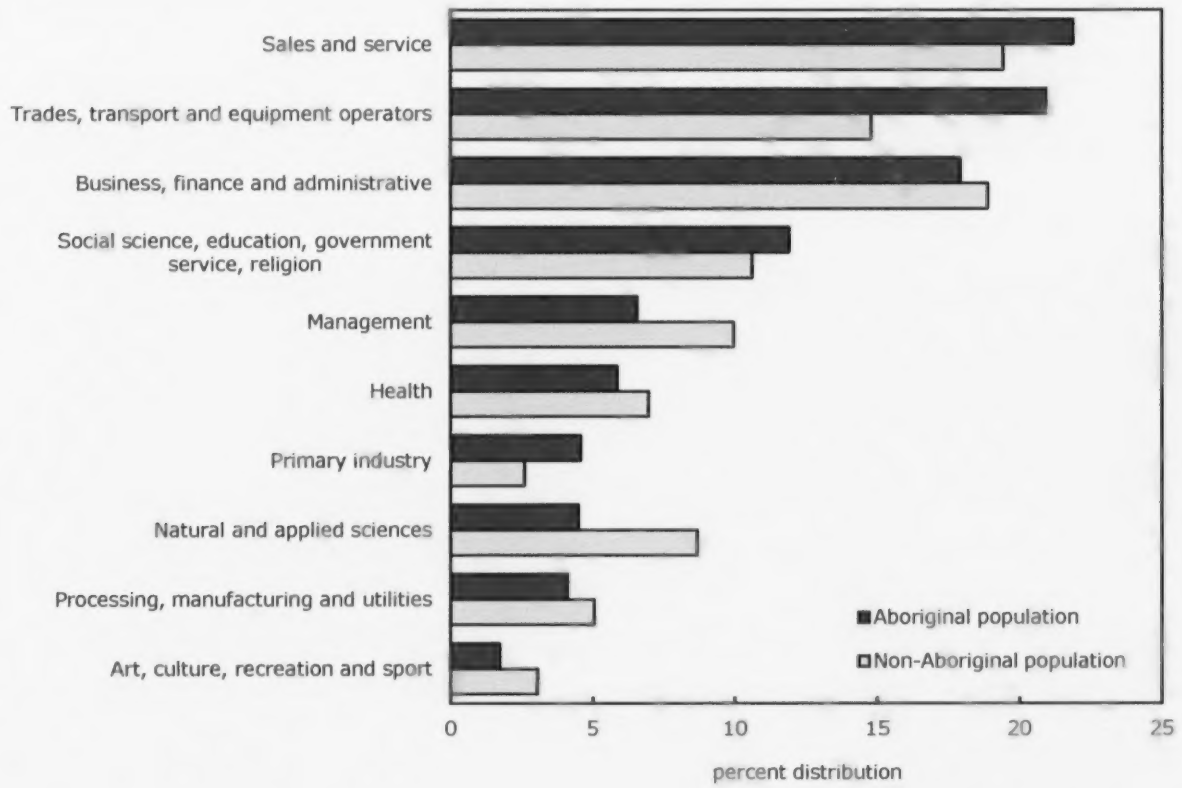
Note(s): Data exclude people living on reserves and in the territories.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

1.3.4 Employment losses by occupation

The occupational distribution is also slightly different among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal core-aged workers. Aboriginal people were more likely to work as trades and transport equipment operators; or in sales and service occupations as well as occupations unique to the primary industry than were non-Aboriginal people in 2010. On the other hand, non-Aboriginal people were more represented in management; and natural and applied sciences occupations than Aboriginal people (Chart 11).

Between 2008 and 2010, most of the employment declines among Aboriginal people were among trades, transport and equipment operators; sales and service workers; occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities; as well as management occupations. Among non-Aboriginal workers, losses also occurred among trades, transport and equipment operators; occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities; managers; and occupations in business, finance and administration.

Chart 11
Employment distribution of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations aged 25 to 54 by occupation, 2010



Note(s): Data exclude people living on reserves and in the territories.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

1.3.5 Other labour market indicators

Like industry and occupation, the distribution of core-aged workers by public, private or self-employment status differs slightly for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations. A higher percentage of Aboriginal than non-Aboriginal workers tend to work in the public sector (Table 4). On the other hand, non-Aboriginal workers were more represented in self-employment than were Aboriginal workers.

Among Aboriginal core-aged workers, job losses between 2008 and 2010 were mainly in the private sector. In 2010, there were also fewer self-employed Aboriginal workers than two years earlier, a trend similar to their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

When deciding whom to layoff during economic downturns, employers take into account how long a worker has been working in the firm. Workers with fewer months or years at the job are usually among the first to be laid off.

From 2008 to 2010, a higher percentage of Aboriginal than non-Aboriginal core-aged workers had worked for their current employer 5 years or less, an average of 58% versus 49%, respectively.

During this same period, job tenure averaged 6.7 years for Aboriginal core-aged workers, lower than the 8.2 years for non-Aboriginal workers.

In 2007 and 2008, a similar proportion of core-aged workers were multiple jobholders among both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people (around 5.3%). While this rate did not change for non-Aboriginal workers during 2009 and 2010, a slightly higher percentage of Aboriginal workers were taking on more than one job at a time in 2010, at 6.0%.

Aboriginal core-aged employees were more likely to be working on a temporary basis than non-Aboriginal employees in 2010. The percentage of Aboriginal employees who worked on a seasonal, contract, or term basis increased to 14% in 2010 from an average of 12% in the previous three years. For the non-Aboriginal population, the percentage of temporary workers increased from 9.1% in 2009 to 9.8% in 2010.

Aboriginal workers are more likely to be represented by a union or covered by a collective agreement (37.2%) than non-Aboriginal core-aged workers (34.2%) in 2010. At $847.36, Aboriginal employees made 92% of the average weekly salary of non-Aboriginal workers ($916.85) in 2010.

Table 4
Selected employment characteristics of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations aged 25 to 54, 2008 to 2010

	Aboriginal population		Non-Aboriginal population	
	2008	2010	2008	2010
Percentage of employed who are...				
Public sector employees	25.3	29.0	22.0	22.7
Private sector employees	63.3	60.0	62.6	62.1
Self-employed	11.4	11.0	15.4	15.2
Multiple jobholders	5.3	6.0	5.2	5.3
Working part-time	12.0	13.1	11.7	12.4
Average usual hours at main job	38.5	37.9	38.1	37.7
Average usual hours at all jobs	39.4	38.7	38.8	38.4
Job tenure in current job				
Average job tenure (in years)	6.7	6.7	8.1	8.2
Percentage of employed who worked 5 years or less in current job	57.8	58.7	49.1	48.8
Percentage of employees who are...				
Temporary	11.7	14.0	8.7	9.8
Covered by a union or collective agreement	35.3	37.2	34.2	34.2
Wages of employees				
Average hourly wage (in current dollars)	21.13	22.15	23.29	24.46
Average weekly wage (in current dollars)	812.88	847.36	878.44	916.85

Note(s): Data exclude people living on reserves and in the territories.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

1.3.6 Hours curtailed

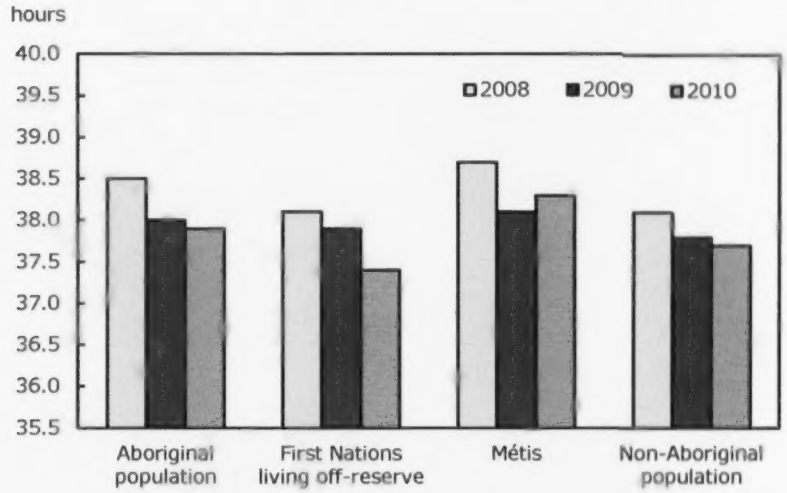
During economic downturns, employers tend to cut hours first before laying off workers. Average usual hours worked at the main job per week declined in both 2009 and 2010 for both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations, with the bulk of the decline occurring in 2009 (Chart 12).

A different pattern emerged among the core-aged First Nations people living off-reserve compared to the Métis in 2010. Among First Nations people living off-reserve, average usual hours fell in both 2009 and 2010, with the largest decline occurring in 2010. Among the Métis, hours fell steeply in 2009 and then increased slightly in 2010.

Also, the proportion of First Nations people living off-reserve working part-time increased from 12.8% in 2009 to 14.8% in 2010. In comparison, the part-time rate for the Métis declined to 11.6% in 2010.

Throughout the 2008 to 2010 period, the Aboriginal population worked slightly more hours per week than the non-Aboriginal population. The Métis worked the highest usual hours per week, at 38.3. The non-Aboriginal population worked an average of 37.7 hours in 2010, while the First Nations people living off-reserve worked an average of 37.4 hours per week.

Chart 12
Average usual hours at main job among those aged 25 to 54 by Aboriginal identity, 2008 to 2010



Note(s): Data exclude people living on reserves and in the territories.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

1.3.7 Employment losses shared by all levels of educational attainment

Employment rates fell within all education levels among core-aged Aboriginal people and non-Aboriginal people between 2008 and 2010 (Table 5). From 2008 to 2009, employment rate declines among both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations were larger among high school graduates and non-graduates than for those who completed post-secondary education.

From 2009 to 2010, employment rates continued to decline among all education levels for Aboriginal core-aged workers, with the largest declines occurring among those who had completed post-secondary education and those who had less than high school education. Among non-Aboriginal people, employment rates increased slightly among graduates and non-graduates of high school.

Table 5
Labour force characteristics of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations aged 25 to 54 by highest level of educational attainment, 2008 to 2010

	2008	2009	2010	2008 to 2010
	percent			percentage point change
Employment rate				
Aboriginal				
Total, all education levels	70.8	68.5	65.8	-5.0
Less than high school	52.8	47.8	45.1	-7.7
High school graduate or some post-secondary	69.9	66.1	64.8	-5.1
Completed post-secondary education	81.2	79.4	76.0	-5.2
Non-Aboriginal				
Total, all education levels	82.6	80.6	80.9	-1.7
Less than high school	65.3	62.4	62.6	-2.7
High school graduate or some post-secondary	80.1	76.9	77.4	-2.7
Completed post-secondary education	86.5	85.0	84.9	-1.6
Unemployment rate				
Aboriginal				
Total, all education levels	9.3	11.6	12.3	3.0
Less than high school	14.4	19.3	21.9	7.5
High school graduate or some post-secondary	9.4	12.8	11.9	2.5
Completed post-secondary education	7.2	8.6	9.5	2.3
Non-Aboriginal				
Total, all education levels	5.0	7.0	6.8	1.8
Less than high school	9.6	12.8	12.8	3.2
High school graduate or some post-secondary	5.3	8.1	7.7	2.4
Completed post-secondary education	4.2	5.8	5.7	1.5
Participation rate				
Aboriginal				
Total, all education levels	78.0	77.5	75.0	-3.0
Less than high school	61.7	59.2	57.8	-3.9
High school graduate or some post-secondary	77.2	75.8	73.6	-3.6
Completed post-secondary education	87.4	86.8	84.0	-3.4
Non-Aboriginal				
Total, all education levels	86.9	86.6	86.7	-0.2
Less than high school	72.2	71.5	71.7	-0.5
High school graduate or some post-secondary	84.6	83.7	83.9	-0.7
Completed post-secondary education	90.3	90.2	90.0	-0.3

Note(s): Data excludes people living on reserves and in the territories.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

1.4 Youths

1.4.1 Labour market also difficult for youths, particularly in Quebec, Manitoba and Alberta

This section examines the labour market participation among youths, that is, those aged 15 to 24 years. Since varying school attendance rates will have an impact on the labour market participation for young people, it is important to consider these rates when analyzing the data. In 2010, 45% of Aboriginal youths were attending school compared to 51% of non-Aboriginal youths. Participation rates may differ between the groups based on school attendance and the age at which education is completed.

In the past, Aboriginal youths have been less likely to participate in the labour market than non-Aboriginal youths. In 2010, 57.0% of the Aboriginal population aged 15 to 24 years were either employed or looking for work compared to 64.8% of non-Aboriginal youths (Table 6). Among Aboriginal youths, First Nations youth living off-reserve were less likely to be participating in the labour market than Métis youths – 50.1% versus 63.3%.

Young people were particularly hard hit by the 2008/2009 economic downturn and this continued into 2010. Participation rates fell between 2008 and 2010 among youths, but more so among Aboriginal than non-Aboriginal youths. From 2008 to 2010, the participation rate of Aboriginal young people declined by 5.0 percentage points compared to a loss of 2.9 points for non-Aboriginal youths. First Nations youths living off-reserve had larger losses than their Métis counterparts (-6.5 versus -4.2 points).

Participation rates fell in all provinces for both the Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youths from 2008 to 2010. Among Aboriginal youths, participation rate declines were steepest in Quebec, Manitoba and Alberta (Table 7) while the Atlantic region had the smallest decline. Among non-Aboriginal young people, there were above average declines in Alberta, British Columbia, Ontario and Manitoba during this two-year period, with smaller declines in the Atlantic region and Quebec.

The highest rate of labour market participation for Aboriginal youths in 2010 was in Alberta (60.6%) and in the Atlantic region (59.6%). Among non-Aboriginal youths, the highest rate was in Saskatchewan (70.7%), Manitoba (70.4%) and Alberta (69.7%).

As fewer Aboriginal youths participated in the labour market in 2010, more attended school. The school attendance rate among Aboriginal young people rose from 42% in 2008 to 45% in 2010. The largest increases during this period were in Ontario, Quebec and Alberta. School attendance also increased among non-Aboriginal young people during this period, from 49% to 51%, with the largest increases in the same provinces.

Table 6
Labour force characteristics of population aged 15 to 24 by Aboriginal identity, 2008 to 2010

	2008	2009	2010	2008 to 2010
	percent			percentage point change
Employment rate				
Aboriginal population	52.5	46.0	45.0	-7.5
First Nations living off-reserve	46.0	40.2	36.6	-9.4
Métis	59.3	52.7	52.6	-6.7
Non-Aboriginal population	60.0	55.8	55.3	-4.7
Unemployment rate				
Aboriginal population	15.3	22.5	21.1	5.8
First Nations living off-reserve	18.7	26.2	26.9	8.2
Métis	12.2	18.9	16.9	4.7
Non-Aboriginal population	11.5	15.0	14.6	3.1
Participation rate				
Aboriginal population	62.0	59.3	57.0	-5.0
First Nations living off-reserve	56.6	54.5	50.1	-6.5
Métis	67.5	65.0	63.3	-4.2
Non-Aboriginal population	67.7	65.7	64.8	-2.9

Note(s): Data exclude people living on reserves and in the territories.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

Table 7
Employment and participation rates of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations aged 15 to 24 by province or region, 2008 to 2010

	Aboriginal population			Non-Aboriginal population		
	2008	2010	2008 to 2010	2008	2010	2008 to 2010
	percent		percentage point change	percent		percentage point change
Employment rate						
Canada	**52.5**	**45.0**	**-7.5**	**60.0**	**55.3**	**-4.7**
Atlantic Region	46.4	44.2	-2.2	55.7	53.0	-2.7
Quebec	53.4	40.6 E	-18.2 E	59.9	58.2	-1.7
Ontario	48.1	44.5	-3.6	56.2	51.1	-5.1
Manitoba	54.8	45.7	-9.1	67.4	63.5	-3.9
Saskatchewan	45.8	42.2	-3.6	69.3	64.9	-4.4
Alberta	59.0	48.2	-10.8	68.7	62.0	-6.7
British Columbia	54.9	45.5	-9.4	62.5	55.1	-7.4
Participation rate						
Canada	**62.0**	**57.0**	**-5.0**	**67.7**	**64.8**	**-2.9**
Atlantic Region	60.2	59.6	-0.6	65.5	63.7	-1.8
Quebec	59.7	53.0	-6.7	68.1	67.5	-0.6
Ontario	60.1	56.2	-3.9	65.0	61.6	-3.4
Manitoba	63.6	57.1	-6.5	73.5	70.4	-3.1
Saskatchewan	56.5	52.8	-3.7	74.1	70.7	-3.4
Alberta	66.8	60.6	-6.2	74.1	69.7	-4.4
British Columbia	62.8	57.9	-4.9	68.1	63.6	-4.5

E use with caution (coefficient of variation between 16.5% and 33.3%)
Note(s): Data exclude people living on reserves and in the territories.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

1.5 Declines among Aboriginal older workers in 2010

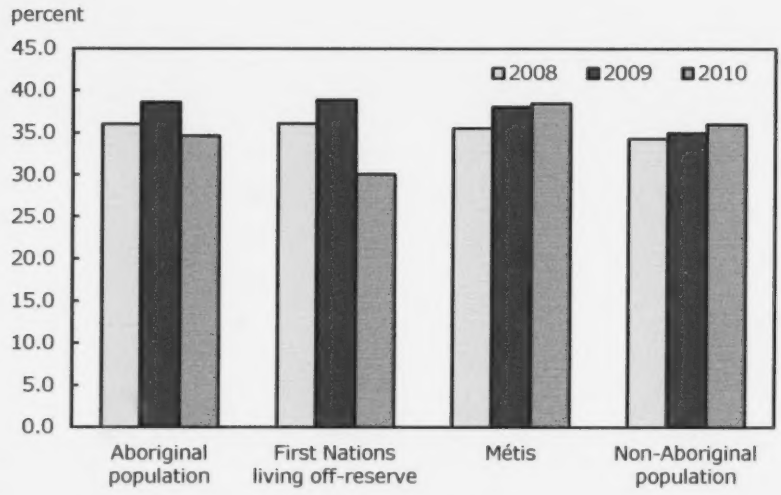
Not only were there fewer Aboriginal youths and core-aged workers participating in the labour market in 2010, there were also fewer people aged 55 and over participating. After increasing in each of 2007, 2008 and 2009, rates of participation declined in 2010 among older Aboriginal workers. This was in contrast to non-Aboriginal workers aged 55 and over, whose participation rate continued to increase throughout the 2007 to 2010 period.

All of the decline in the participation rate among Aboriginal older workers was due to decreased participation among those who identified as First Nations people. Between 2008 and 2010, the participation rate among First Nations people aged 55 and over and living off-reserve declined 6.0 percentage points to 30.1%. In contrast, participation rates increased among the Métis to 38.5% (+3.0 points) and among the non-Aboriginal population, to 36.0% (+1.7 points) (Chart 13).

The largest declines in the participation rates among Aboriginal older workers were in Ontario and British Columbia between 2008 and 2010. On the other hand, participation rates increased in Alberta during the same period, reaching 46.7% in 2010 (Table 8).

Alberta and British Columbia had the highest percentages of Aboriginal older workers participating in the labour market in 2010, higher than their non-Aboriginal counterparts.

Chart 13
Participation rate of population aged 55 and over by Aboriginal identity, 2008 to 2010



Note(s): Data exclude people living on reserves and in the territories.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

Table 8
Employment and participation rates of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal populations aged 55 and over by province or region, 2008 to 2010

	Aboriginal population			Non-Aboriginal population		
	2008	2010	2008 to 2010	2008	2010	2008 to 2010
	percent		percentage point change	percent		percentage point change
Employment rate						
Canada	**33.7**	**30.3**	**-3.4**	**32.6**	**33.7**	**1.1**
Atlantic Region	26.9	26.1	-0.8	27.8	29.6	1.8
Quebec	23.2 E	19.1 E	-4.1 E	27.9	29.3	1.4
Ontario	33.5	26.6	-6.9	33.7	34.7	1.0
Manitoba	37.8	36.9	-0.9	34.5	38.3	3.8
Saskatchewan	39.1	32.6	-6.5	36.4	39.9	3.5
Alberta	35.8	41.3	5.5	43.6	41.7	-1.9
British Columbia	39.6	36.0	-3.6	32.5	34.0	1.5
Participation rate						
Canada	**36.0**	**34.6**	**-1.4**	**34.3**	**36.0**	**1.7**
Atlantic Region	31.0	32.0	1.0	30.5	32.9	2.4
Quebec	24.4 E	23.5 E	-0.9 E	29.9	31.5	1.6
Ontario	35.0	30.4	-4.6	35.5	37.1	1.6
Manitoba	39.4	39.1	-0.3	35.5	39.7	4.2
Saskatchewan	40.4	38.8	-1.6	37.5	41.4	3.9
Alberta	39.0	46.7	7.7	44.7	43.8	-0.9
British Columbia	43.6	39.8	-3.8	33.7	35.9	2.2

E use with caution (coefficient of variation between 16.5% and 33.3%)
Note(s): Data exclude people living on reserves and in the territories.
Source(s): Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey.

1.6 Conclusion

The 2008-2009 labour market downturn had a longer and deeper impact on the Aboriginal workforce compared to non-Aboriginal workers. This widened the gap in the rates of participation, employment and unemployment between both populations.

As employment among Aboriginal people continued to decline in 2010, fewer Aboriginal people participated in the labour market. In 2010, 62.6% of the Aboriginal working-age population participated in the labour market compared with 67.1% of the non-Aboriginal population – a gap of 4.5 percentage points. This was the largest gap observed between these two groups over the four-year period that comparable data has been available.

Between 2008 and 2010, the employment rate fell the most among Aboriginal core-aged workers in Quebec, British Columbia, Ontario and Alberta. Employment rates among Aboriginal core-aged workers in Quebec and British Columbia were the lowest nationally in 2010, at 61.1% and 62.7%, respectively.

The decline in manufacturing employment associated with the 2008 downturn affected both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, as this industry posted the sharpest decline in employment for both groups of between 2008 and 2010. Trades, transport and equipment operators; sales and service workers; occupations unique to processing, manufacturing and utilities; as well as management occupations experienced the greatest job losses among these core-aged workers.

Employment declined for both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal core-aged people in the private sector, among employees and the self-employed. Among Aboriginal people, a higher percentage took on more than one job in 2010 than in 2008 and more were in a temporary job than among the non-Aboriginal population. Both groups, however, were working fewer hours over this two-year period.

Employment rates fell across all education levels for both core-aged Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal workers between 2008 and 2010.

Youths were particularly hard hit by the 2008/2009 economic downturn and this continued into 2010. Participation rates continued to fall among both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youths from 2008 to 2010, but more so among Aboriginal youths. Young Aboriginal people in Quebec, Manitoba and Alberta had the largest decline in their participation rates. More of these youths, however, were attending school during this period. Ontario, Quebec and Alberta had the largest increase in their school attendance rate.

While an increasing proportion of Aboriginal workers aged 55 and over participated in the labour market from 2007 to 2009, fewer participated in 2010. This was in contrast to non-Aboriginal older workers, whose participated rate increased throughout the 2007 to 2010 period. Among the older Aboriginal population, the 2010 decline in the participation rate was concentrated among First Nations people living off-reserve.